



HGR Elite Program
A Complete Recruiting
Guide 2015

RECRUITING

- **INTRO**
- **GENERAL**
 - **A LONG GREY PATH**
 - **SELF PROMOTION**
 - **ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS**
 - **GRADES**
 - **EARLY COMMITMENT**
 - **RELATIVE COMPETITIVENESS**
 - **HOW TO PICK A SCHOOL**
- **WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING YEAR TO YEAR**
 - **FRESHMAN**
 - **SOPHOMORE**
 - **JUNIOR**
 - **SENIOR**
- **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**
 - **ONLINE RECRUITING PROFILES?**
 - **PROSPECT DAYS?**
 - **CAN MY PARENTS HELP WITH THE RECRUITING PROCESS?**
 - **BODY LANGUAGE**

As a member of the HGR Elite program you will:

- Have access to our coaching staff and our extensive knowledge of the recruiting process.
- Attend the *Welcome to the Program* night where we will discuss the recruiting process in depth.
- Have access to in-person recruiting meetings with your parents and our coaching staff.
- Be able to reach Coach Brazill or Coach Smyth via email or phone with any questions that may arise throughout the process.
- Have access to the Krossover film software that will allow you to analyze, clip and share HGR game film as well as create, highlight tapes.

But even with all of these services at your fingertips, it's nice to have a general reference that can help get/ keep you on the right path. This document is designed to be that general reference.

General

A long grey path – The recruiting process can be daunting when trying to look at it from start to finish. It is a long path with very few black and white answers or choices. However, if you stay diligent and take it step by step, every player in this program will have the opportunity to play college lacrosse. Every year the large majority of our seniors go on to play college lacrosse and receive scholarship money.

Self-promotion – According to USlacrosse.org, there are 290,000 high school lacrosse players in the US and only 36,000 college lacrosse players, which includes non-varsity players participating at the collegiate club level. That means that roughly 12% of high school lacrosse players go on to play college lacrosse at any level. At a tournament like the U-Mass Mid-Summer Classic there are over 2,500 players doing their best to get noticed and extend their careers to the collegiate level.

Coaches don't attend these tournaments without an agenda –they are absolutely looking to find the next great player for their program. They show up with a specific list of players that they're interested in, most of which reached out to them first. (Later in this document, we will get into how and when to contact a coach, but you need to know that it is incredibly important and standard operating procedure for players to reach out to coaches.) This is how coaches find the majority of their players. If they see someone they like on film, they will get out to see you play live at tournaments to confirm what they believe they saw on your film.

Coaches will occasionally get a recommendation to get out and watch a kid from a trusted colleague, or high school or club coach, but it's rare. It's only once in a blue moon that a coach stumbles upon a player at a tournament that they feel fits their program's needs: talent, athleticism, grades, position, year of graduation. Then on top of that, that player needs to be interested in the coach's program as well. It's not an efficient use of time, so it's not how coaches use their time.

If you are hoping to attend tournaments and get noticed by a program without doing any of the up-front work, you most likely will not be successful.

Athletic scholarships – Syracuse, Virginia, Duke, Hopkins are all fully funded programs. They are the elite of the elite, and even they are allotted a maximum of 12.6 scholarships by the NCAA. That is not 12.6 scholarships per year; it's 12.6 scholarships for rosters that average between 40 and 60 players. DII gets a maximum of 10.8 athletic scholarships per roster and DIII doesn't have athletic scholarships. The reality is, if you are expecting to receive a full scholarship to play college lacrosse, chances are you will be disappointed.

Grades - With the limited athletic scholarship money available to student athletes, the student part of that equation becomes paramount. You want to make yourself an attractive recruit.

If two players of similar ability are being recruited to the same school for the same position and one has a 3.6 GPA and the other has a 2.6 GPA, the better student is going to win out every time. Assuming both players are even capable of getting accepted to the school, the player with the 3.6 GPA is going to receive significantly more academic money from the institution than the player with the 2.6 GPA. That means if the coach values both players equally, in terms of potential scholarship money, and the school gives the student athlete with the higher GPA \$10,000, then that coach just saved himself \$10,000 from his limited pool of athletic aid. He now has an additional \$10,000 to spend on his next recruit. Ties are always going to go to the better student.

Simply stated, if you are a good student, you put yourself in the position to receive academic aid. Not every student is a 4.0 student and that's okay. Just make sure you are doing all you can in the classroom to keep as many doors open as possible.

Early commitment - Players don't commit as early as you think. 70% of players commit during their junior or senior years of high school. Freshmen and sophomores do get recruited, but it is rare. If you are entering your junior or senior year it's not time to panic, it's time to get busy. You are in the prime recruiting years of your high school career. Every division and program within those divisions has different needs and recruiting timelines.

DIII spends the majority of their time recruiting rising seniors over the summer and continues recruiting hard into the fall of those players' senior year. DI and top tier DII spend the majority of their time recruiting sophomores during their fall season and rising juniors over the summer and into the fall of their Jr. year. Any program from any division can fall anywhere within or slightly outside of these parameters.

The transfer and de-commit rates of players who commit prior to their rising junior summer is significantly higher than those who commit later. We want to see you find your four-year home rather than rush into a decision or situation that doesn't best suit you. However, occasionally a great situation will present itself early, and if it's the right fit for the right reasons, you should jump on it. Just don't expect it or force it.

Relative competitiveness – “The higher you go the better” is a common misconception in the recruiting process. Not only are a number of DII and DIII schools capable of beating a number of DI schools, but relative competitiveness is extremely important in the selection process.

You might be capable of getting recruited to a top 5 DIII school, but you wind up fighting for your life each year to stay on the team. You could also get recruited to a top 50 DIII school, where you can contribute on the field and your team is fighting to win your conference every year, as well as compete in the NCAA tournament.

Or, let's compare a player who gets recruited to the bottom third of DI and wins 15 games in their career vs. a player who gets recruited top 5 DII or DIII and wins 15 games a season and competes for a national championship.

Ideally, you want to play at the best program that you are capable of playing at, a program that is competitive in their world of lacrosse, and where you can contribute on the field. You also want to be able to grow and develop with the program. You don't want to be the best player on the team when you step on campus freshman year, because that probably means you should have gone to a better program. You also don't want to be at the end of the bench and never get to step onto the field. You should be looking for a program where you can find a small roll where you can contribute as a freshman, fight for a starting position as a sophomore, start as a junior and dominate as a senior.

How to pick a school – If you are participating in the HGR program we will assume that lacrosse is an important part of your life and should be an important part of your college selection process. However, there are going to be 22 hours a day that you don't have a helmet on. Factor in film and lifting on busy days and you are still talking 19 or so hours where you are just a regular student. That means that the social and educational factors have to play a major role in your selection as well.

Odds are you aren't going to go on to become a professional lacrosse player, and the fact is that even if you do, you are going to need another job to pay your bills. Make sure you are going to a school where the education and degree you receive will help you get a job. You also want to make sure the education isn't so far over your head that you get lost in the classroom or aren't able to stay in school.

Socially, is it a commuter school where students pack up and leave every weekend? Is it too wild of a party school where you won't be able to focus on lacrosse or your studies? Is it too small? Too big? Too close or far away from home? These are all factors that need to be considered. Take a lot of virtual tours on the school websites, and visit a lot of schools in person. Almost all of our players live within a 45 minute drive from big schools, small schools, city schools, suburban schools, private schools, public schools... Start visiting them as a freshman to get a feel for what you do and do not like.

What should I be doing each year of high school to put myself in the best position to succeed?

Freshman – in their fall seasons

Grades – Stay on top of your grades. Transitioning from middle school to high school can be difficult, and there are many distractions. College seems like a lifetime away and grades may not seem like a priority to you now. However, if you stay on top of your grades and develop good study habits when you are young, it will be much easier for you to maintain a good GPA rather than try to pull a bad GPA up.

Start thinking big picture – Do you like the idea of a big school or a small school? Do you want to be in the city or the country? Do you want to be on the east coast, west coast, or somewhere in-between? What profession could you see yourself doing? Don't think in terms of committing to these preferences or ideas, just start to think about them and pay attention to what you are drawn towards or away from.

Get out and visit colleges with your parents on long weekends or school vacations while colleges are still in session.

Get into the habit of developing film – Most likely the only people who will see your freshman year film are your parents, friends, and yourself. That's good news because most first attempts at creating a quality highlight tape are less than successful. For some of our standout players who are headed to top level DI programs your freshman year film will be very important. For the rest of you it will just be great practice, fun, and a good teaching tool to continue to develop your game.

Mom and Dad, you can get used to filming, players can get used to editing and posting film to YouTube ,and your HGR coaches can look at your film and teach you the difference between a quality highlight and one that you think looks good but a coach won't like.

Develop a list – Identify 20 schools that you are interested in for any reason-- athletics, academics, uniform colors, girl to guy ratio--anything.

If you meet with your HGR coaches and they agree that you have some mid-high DI or top 5 DII or DIII options that are viable, we will start working with you to reach out to those coaches.

If you are not looking at schools of that caliber, you should still share your list with your HGR coach. Your list should have athletic stretches, safeties, and good fits. While your coaches can help you refine your list and let you know if you are on the right track, we always encourage the players to make the initial list. It is a nice coaching tool for us to see if the player is self-aware, overconfident, or lacks confidence.

You should also meet with your school's academic advisor to make sure you have academic stretches, safeties and good fits on your list. All of your schools should have lacrosse programs.

Rules to be aware of – Coaches cannot contact you during your freshman year. If you email them, they cannot email you back. If you call them, they cannot call you back. However, they can work with your club coach, i.e., HGR, to get you on campus for a visit

or to arrange a time to call when the coach will be by their phone. If a coach answers their phone when you call they are permitted to speak with you.

Coaches cannot speak to players at tournaments.

While it is unlikely, you can verbally commit to a school your freshman year. You will not sign your NLI (National Letter of Intent) until fall of your senior year.

Sophomores – both rising sophomores (playing in the summer entering their sophomore year) and sophomores playing in their fall season.

Grades – Again, stay on top of your grades. Don't close any doors that you can keep open with better effort in the classroom.

Recruiting meetings – All sophomores should set up a recruiting meeting at the HGR offices for your coaches, parents, and yourself to discuss your specific recruiting path and steps you should be taking.

Refining your list of 20 – You should have a running list of 20 programs that you are interested in. The list will be a more educated list your sophomore year than it was your freshman year. It remains important to have 20 schools for several reasons. First and foremost, you are 15, maybe 16 years old in your sophomore year. You will change your mind several times on what interests you before the recruiting process wraps up. Secondly, a number of the schools you are interested in will not be interested in you. That's okay; every coach has different wants and needs, evaluates players differently and places a priority on different attributes and skill sets of a player.

By the end of the fall of your sophomore year, the list you started developing at the beginning of your rising sophomore summer will most likely be down to five schools. If you have five schools that you are interested in and they are interested in you, that's a great situation. If you are not getting the interest from the schools you want, it's time to build that list back up again for your rising junior summer.

Contacting coaches – You should be emailing coaches and filling out schools' prospective student athlete questionnaire forms. (They can be found on any school's athletic webpage.) Your emails to the coaches should be short and to the point: who you are, that you are interested in their program and school, where you play (both position and school), an HGR coach's contact info for a reference (if the coach wants one), your year of graduation, and a link to your highlight tape.

Film – Your highlight tape should be between 2:30 and 5:00 minutes long, and filled with true highlights. If it's not an "A" don't put it in the film. Coaches have short attention spans and receive countless films a year. You want to make sure that no matter how much time the coach spends watching your film they get a good idea of who you are as a player and athlete.

Some coaches may request full game films, others will just get out and see you play live. You will be able to access all of your HGR games through Krossover software. You will receive a log in name and password after your first tournament. From there, you will be able to view, clip, and share the raw footage from any HGR game you played in.

Rules to be aware of – Coaches cannot contact you during your sophomore year. If you email them, they cannot email you back. If you call them, they cannot call you back. However, they can work with your club coach, i.e., HGR, to get you on campus for a visit or to arrange a time to call when the coach will be by their phone. If a coach answers their phone when you call they are permitted to speak with you.

Coaches cannot speak to players at tournaments.

While it is unlikely, you can verbally commit to a school your sophomore year. You will not sign your NLI (National Letter of Intent) until fall of your senior year.

As of June 15th of your sophomore year / rising junior summer, DII coaches can contact you with no restrictions relative to the number of texts, calls, emails etc.

Juniors – both rising juniors (playing in the summer entering their junior year) and juniors playing in their fall season.

Grades – Grades in your junior year are the most closely scrutinized by college admission boards. You are nowhere near the time where you can start to take it easy or “put it on cruise control.”

Recruiting meetings – All juniors should set up a recruiting meeting at the HGR offices for your coaches, parents, and yourself to discuss your specific recruiting path and steps you should be taking.

Refining your list of 20 – If you weren’t recruited as a sophomore, you are in the majority. It is time to build your list of 20 programs back up. By the time you are a junior or rising junior, you should have a better idea of what schools you will be capable of playing lacrosse at, what schools you will be academically able to get into, your demographic and geographic preferences, and possibly even what you want to study. So, why do you still need 20 schools on your list? Again, you are a teenager, you change your mind. It’s what you do. You still don’t know what coaches are going to be interested in you. Every coach has different wants and needs, evaluates players differently, and places priority on different attributes and skill sets of a player. You may go on an official visit to a school and have your entire image of that school and program turned on its head. Cast a broad net and start whittling it down once you have viable choices.

By the end of the fall of your junior year, the list you started developing at the beginning of your rising sophomore summer will most likely be down to five schools. If you have five schools that you are interested in and they are interested in you, that’s a

great situation. It's time to get on campuses for official visits and probably commit to a program. If you are not getting the interest from the schools you want, it's time to build that list back up again and possibly reevaluate the programs you are looking at.

Contacting coaches – You should be emailing coaches and filling out a school's prospective student athlete questionnaire forms. (They can be found on any school's athletic webpage.) Your emails to the coaches should be short and to the point: who you are, that you are interested in their program and school, where you play, both position and school, an HGR coaches contact info for a reference if the coach wants one, your year of graduation, and a link to your highlight tape.

Film - Your highlight tape should be between 2:30 and 5:00 minutes long and filled with true highlights. If it's not an "A" don't put it in the film. Coaches have short attention spans and receive countless films a year. You want to make sure that no matter how much time the coach spends watching your film, they get a good idea of who you are as a player and athlete.

Some coaches will request full game films. From there, some will just get out and see you play live. You will be able to access all of your HGR games through Krossover software. You will receive a log in name and password after your first tournament. From there you will be able to view, clip and share the raw footage from any HGR game you played in.

Going on official visits – Prior to going on an official visit, you should call the HGR offices or come in for a quick meeting to go over what to expect and how you will be expected to act. We can also go over how you should dress, prepare you with some answers to questions that are often asked by coaches, and provide good questions to ask the coaches to make sure you get the most out of your visit.

If you go to a school on an official visit your experience will vary. Most official visits will include a tour of the campus lead by either the head coach or one of their assistants, attending a class with one of the players on the team, attending a practice, and then staying overnight and hanging out with the team to get an idea of the social atmosphere of the school. Generally the coaching staff will have you watch another practice the next morning or check out a scrimmage. They will also meet with you and your parents to discuss where they are in the recruiting process and where you fit in that picture.

Official visits are a great way for a recruit to get a better understanding of how the school and program operate. They are not always offered but if they are you should attend. Just remember, you are on a job interview-- dress the part, act professional and stay out of trouble.

Rules to be aware of – DII coaches cannot contact you until June 15th in the summer of your rising junior year. If you email them before that, they cannot email you back. If you call them before that, they cannot call you back. However they can work with your

club coach, i.e., HGR, to get you on campus for a visit or to arrange a time to call when the coach will be by their phone. If a coach answers their phone when you call they are permitted to speak with you.

DI coaches cannot contact you until the fall of your junior year. The above restrictions for DII apply to DI but run longer. DIII coaches have no restrictions at this time.

Coaches cannot speak to players at tournaments.

A number of you will verbally commit your junior year but will not sign your NLI (National Letter of Intent) until fall of your senior year.

Seniors – both rising seniors (playing in the summer entering their senior year) and seniors playing in their fall season.

Grades – Stay on top of your grades. Hopefully you've worked hard to keep a high GPA for the last three years. Don't undo all of your hard work now. Players can and do get dropped from programs and institutions for letting their grades slip.

Recruiting meetings – All uncommitted seniors should set up a recruiting meeting at the HGR offices for your coaches, parents, and yourself to discuss your specific recruiting path and steps you should be taking.

Refining your list – If you weren't recruited as a junior, the summer of your rising senior year and the following fall are your last chance to get recruited. This does not mean that it's time to panic. The majority of players get recruited in their junior and senior year. While it's not time to panic, it is time to make sure you are doing everything you can to put yourself in the best position possible to get recruited to a school where you want to play.

If this is your first year playing club lacrosse or your first year in the HGR program you should reference **Refining your list of 20** in the sophomore and junior sections of this document.

If you have already been through this process, you are likely well aware of schools you should be focusing on, taking into consideration many factors, including lacrosse, academics, demographics, geographic preferences and what you want to study. You also have likely weeded out a lot of schools, either because they weren't interested in you or you changed your mind about your interest in them. It's time to come up with a focused and refined list of two-three stretch schools, two-three safety schools, and about five schools that are a good fit, socially academically and athletically.

Contacting Coaches – You should be emailing coaches and filling out prospective student athlete questionnaire forms. (They can be found on any school's athletic webpage.) You should also be calling coaches. Your emails to the coaches should be short and to the point. Who you are, that you are interested in their program and

school, where you play, both position and school, an HGR coaches contact info for a reference if the coach wants one, your year of graduation and a link to your highlight tape.

Calling a coach can be very uncomfortable for a high school student but at this point in the recruiting process it is a nice way to separate yourself from the masses. Keep the phone calls short and to the point as well: “Hi coach, my name is, I’ve sent you a few emails, just seeing where you were at in the recruiting process and if you’ve had a chance to take a look at my film.”

Keep in close contact with Coach Brazill, Coach Smyth and your team’s HGR coach regarding your recruiting situation. If you are not receiving responses from coaches you have repeatedly contacted, we will step in and contact coaches for you. We will only do this if we feel you are capable of playing at the school you are requesting us to reach out to, if that school is one of your top three choices, and if you have made a sincere effort to contact that coach.

Generally, coaches want to hear from the student athlete--not their coach and certainly never their parents. If you have done everything right and have run into a dead-end we will step in and generally have great success with helping.

Film - Your highlight tape should be between 2:30 and 5:00 minutes long and filled with true highlights. If it’s not an “A” don’t put it in the film. Coaches have short attention spans and receive countless films a year. You want to make sure that no matter how much time the coach spends watching your film that they get a good idea of who you are as a player and athlete.

Some coaches will request full game films. From there, some will just get out and see you play live. You will be able to access all of your HGR games through Krossover software. You will receive a log in name and password after your first tournament. From there you will be able to view, clip and share the raw footage from any HGR game you played in.

Going on official visits – Prior to going on an official visit, you should call the HGR offices or come in for a quick meeting to go over what to expect and how you will be expected to act. We can also go over how you should dress, prepare you with some answers to questions that are often asked by coaches, and provide good questions to ask the coaches to make sure you get the most out of your visit.

If you go to a school on an official visit, your experience will vary. Most official visits will include a tour of the campus led by either the head coach or one of their assistants, attending a class with one of the players on the team, attending a practice and then staying overnight and hanging out with the team to get an idea of the social atmosphere of the school. Generally, the coaching staff will have you watch another practice the next morning or check out a scrimmage. They will also meet with you and

your parents to discuss where they are at in the recruiting process and where you fit in that picture.

Official visits are a great way for a recruit to get a better understanding of how the school and program operate. They are not always offered but if they are you should attend. Just remember, you are on a job interview--dress the part, act professional and stay out of trouble.

Frequently Asked Questions

Should I have an online recruiting profile?

Online recruiting profiles are expensive and put one more step in-between your film and the coach. Coaches are busy and get anywhere between hundreds and thousands of emails from recruits every year. They want to be able to read your email quickly and click on a link that will directly pull up your highlight tape. Often online recruiting profiles will require coaches to sign into their server in order to view videos. YouTube links are the preferred means of viewing film. That's good news for you because it's free and easy to post.

I got invited to a prospect day. Should I go?

That depends. Prospect days have to be available to all players or it is considered a recruiting advantage and as such an NCAA violation. That means anyone can attend any program's prospect days (from the worst program in DIII to the best program in DI) regardless of their skills or lack of skills.

Some programs will paper the earth with information on their prospect days simply to create revenue. Some programs will be selective in who they invite. It can be difficult to tell who is doing what. You may attend a tournament this summer and receive an email the next day from a coach saying he saw you play, when in fact he did not and sent that email out to everyone who attended the tournament. On the other hand, you and two of your best friends may receive an email from a coach who actually did see the three of you play and is interested in seeing more of you.

The best advice we can give on prospect days is to go if you are invited to a school that's one of your top three choices, regardless of why you were invited. If you have the availability in your schedule, prospect days are a great way to play in front of the coaching staff you are interested in, while getting their undivided attention for an extended period of time. You will also undoubtedly get valuable coaching throughout the day and most times get a tour of campus, which will give you good insight to the type of school you are interested in.

If a school is outside your top three, or you are unavailable to attend, make sure you reply to the coach. Simply thank the coach for his invite and tell him you are unavailable that day but that you are interested in his program and hope to see him at one of your future tournaments. If a coach likes you he will never stop recruiting you because you cannot attend his prospect day. Coaches will do anything they can to put the best possible team on the field every year and they aren't going to jeopardize that because you didn't attend a prospect day.

Can my parents help with the recruiting process?

Yes, but all contact should be between you, your HGR coach, and the college coach. Or your high school coach and the college coach. Parents should never write emails posing as the player. It is always very transparent.

Coaches are not only recruiting skill sets they are recruiting personalities. They want to know they are recruiting a player who is mature and able to adjust to the demands of college lacrosse without the help of their parents.

Does my body language at a showcase really matter?

Yes! Next time you see a player slam a stick, argue with an official, or yell at a teammate, look around at the college coaches immediately. Every one of their heads will be down looking at their player binders. They are crossing that player off their list. That's all it takes. With 2,500 kids at a tournament, a coach doesn't want one with an attitude problem.

Does the score of a showcase game matter?

No! Coaches will show up for half a game, at the longest, to see you play at a tournament. Most times they won't know the score and they never care. Let's say a coach shows up at the beginning of the second half to watch you play and HGR is up by 10 goals. You decide the game is in hand so you don't hustle as hard for ground balls or you are throwing ill-advised behind the back passes. That coach is going to think you are a lazy player who makes bad decisions. On the other hand, if they show up at half time and you are losing by 10 but you beat your defender, draw a slide and throw a great pass to a teammate, they will recognize you beating a quality defender and making a nice play.

If your teammate drops that pass or puts it in the back of the net also does not matter. That coach is there to watch you and the quality of your play does not depend on your teammate's ability. If they drop your pass pat them on the back when the ball goes the other way. This will do three things. One, your teammate will forget about their mistake and worry about the next play. Two, the team will be better off. And three, the coach will notice your character in a positive way.

What if I'm not getting an answer from a coach?

There are a number of reasons you may not be hearing back from a coach. The most common reason is that coaches are extremely busy and unable to handle the volume of interest they get. Stay on top of coaches and be a polite pain in the butt that they have to reply to. Just space your emails out weekly and call occasionally.

Another reason could be that you are too young for them to reply to. If this is the case, make sure you include your HGR coaches' contact info so they can get in touch with us directly.

Some coaches are just inconsiderate of the fact that you are 15-18 years old trying to make a difficult decision about where you want to spend four years of your life. It's not right, but often times the reality. If this is the case, call Bryan or Pete at the office and we will get that coach on the phone to get more information out of them.

Finally, and what I find to be the least acceptable, is that some coaches simply won't reply if they aren't interested. It's hard to tell if that's happening and should be your last assumption. Again, get in touch with Bryan or Pete and they will get to the bottom of it.

If you have questions, please feel free to reach out. We're here for you.

Call us at (978) 208-2300